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Towards global partnerships

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Towards global partnerships: a principle-based approach to enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 55/215 of 21 December 2000, 56/76 of 11 December 2001, 58/129 of 19 December 2003, 60/215 of 22 December 2005, 62/211 of 19 December 2007, 64/223 of 21 December 2009, 66/223 of 22 December 2011, 68/234 of 20 December 2013 and 70/224 of 22 December 2015, as well as its decision 72/543 of 20 December 2017,

Reaffirming its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions — economic, social and environmental — in a balanced and integrated manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

Reaffirming also its resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it, helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, and reaffirms the strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity,

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Reaffirming further its resolution 71/243 of 21 December 2016 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and the general guidelines and principles contained therein, as well as its resolution 72/279 of 31 May 2018, and welcoming the efforts of the Secretary-General to better position the United Nations operational activities for development to support countries in their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including by putting in place a reinvigorated resident coordinator system that gives resident coordinators a central role in leading United Nations coordination activities with regard to innovative partnerships and investments relating to the Sustainable Development Goals at the country level,

Reaffirming the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as other international instruments relating to human rights and international law, emphasizing the responsibilities of all States, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, to respect, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status, and reiterating that the Sustainable Development Goals seek to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls,

Underlining the need to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for achieving sustainable development and to build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, and reaffirming that good governance, rule of law, human rights, fundamental freedoms, equal access to fair justice systems and measures to combat corruption and curb illicit financial flows will be integral to those efforts,

Reiterating its determination to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence, and reaffirming that there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development,

Recalling the objectives underpinning the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and as an integral part thereof, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, in particular with regard to developing partnerships through the provision of greater opportunities to the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society in general so as to enable them to contribute to the realization of the goals and programmes of the Organization, in particular in the pursuit of sustainable development and the eradication of poverty,

Welcoming, therefore, the contribution of all relevant partners, including the private sector and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, philanthropic organizations and academia, that respect and support the core values and principles of the United Nations, to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals,

Emphasizing that cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector, delivers vital contributions to addressing the obstacles confronted in particular by developing countries through responsible business practices, such as respecting the principles of the United Nations Global Compact and taking action, including by mobilizing the resources needed to finance sustainable development, and to realizing the internationally agreed development goals in developing countries,

Recognizing the unique position of the United Nations as a builder of bridges among countries and all stakeholders, and the progress achieved in the work of the United Nations on partnerships, notably in the framework of various United Nations organizations, agencies, funds, programmes, task forces, commissions and initiatives, and noting the establishment of partnerships at the field level entered into by various

United Nations agencies, non-public partners and Member States, as well as multi-stakeholder partnerships,

Underlining the fact that cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, including the private sector, and all partnerships using the United Nations name or emblem shall serve the purposes and principles embodied in the Charter and shall be undertaken in a manner that maintains and promotes the integrity, impartiality and independence of the Organization,

Welcoming the efforts and encouraging further efforts by all relevant partners, including the private sector, to engage as reliable and consistent partners in the development process and to take into account not only the economic and financial but also the developmental, social, human rights, gender and environmental implications of their undertakings, and, in general, towards implementing corporate social and environmental responsibility, that is, bringing such values and responsibilities to bear on their conduct and policies premised on profit incentives, in conformity with national laws and regulations,

Emphasizing that multi-stakeholder partnerships in particular and the resources, knowledge and ingenuity of all relevant stakeholders will be important in mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, complementing the efforts of Governments and supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular in developing countries,

Recalling the Guidelines on a Principle-based Approach to the Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector and their alignment with the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework,[1]

Recalling also that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges the roles and contributions of civil society, including the scientific and technological community and non-governmental organizations, as well as other relevant international organizations, including international financial institutions and multilateral development banks, in advancing sustainable development, and that the implementation of sustainable development will depend on the active engagement of those actors, and recognizing that the active participation of the private sector can contribute to the achievement of sustainable development,

Recognizing the contributions of all relevant partners, including the private sector, in fostering stability and supporting recovery by creating job opportunities, advancing economic development, as well as infrastructure development, and, as appropriate, contributing to trust, reconciliation and security,

Noting the need for values and principles in business, including for sustainable business practices, social protection floors and the promotion of full and productive employment and decent work for all,

Reaffirming the principles of sustainable development, and underlining the global consensus reached on the key values and principles that will promote sustainable, fair, equitable and sustained economic development and that corporate social and environmental responsibility are important elements of that consensus,

Recognizing the continued efforts by the Development Cooperation Forum of the Economic and Social Council and other relevant forums, such as the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, to strengthen inclusive partnerships with the private sector and other stakeholders to improve the quality, impact and effectiveness of development cooperation in adherence to agreed

[1] A/HRC/17/31, annex.

development effectiveness principles, which promote country ownership, results orientation and the alignment of activities with national priorities,

Encouraging the private sector in the context of enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all its relevant partners to enhance its involvement in combating climate change, and welcoming the commitments to leadership on climate action already made by those private sector partners,

Recalling that the high-level political forum on sustainable development has a central role in overseeing follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level, including with regard to partnerships and the impact of partnerships on progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals,

Stressing the importance of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in supporting the participation in follow-up and review processes by the major groups and other relevant stakeholders pursuant to resolution 67/290 of 9 July 2013, and calling upon those actors to report on their contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Recognizing the vital role that the United Nations Global Compact Office continues to play with regard to strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to partner strategically with the private sector, in accordance with its mandate from the General Assembly, to advance United Nations values and responsible business practices within the United Nations system and among the global business community, and in this regard welcoming the principles and initiatives of the United Nations Global Compact,

1. *Acknowledges* that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[2] can only be realized with a strong commitment to partnership at all levels between Governments, the private sector, civil society and all other relevant stakeholders, and therefore recognizes the importance of the various contributions of all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, to that end;

2. *Welcomes* the report of the Secretary-General on enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector;[3]

3. *Stresses* that partnerships are voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both public and non-public, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and, as mutually agreed, to share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits;

4. *Also stresses* that new alliances and partnerships will be critical to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, as an effective instrument for mobilizing additional human and financial resources, expertise, technology and knowledge, while reiterating that those alliances and partnerships are a complement to, but are not intended as a substitute for, the commitment made by Governments with a view to achieving the Goals;

5. *Further stresses* that partnerships should be consistent with national laws and national development strategies and plans, as well as the priorities of countries where they are implemented, bearing in mind the relevant guidance provided by Governments;

6. *Emphasizes* the vital role played by Governments in promoting responsible business practices, including providing and ensuring enforcement of the necessary legal and regulatory frameworks in accordance with national legislation and development

[2] Resolution 70/1.

[3] A/73/326.

priorities, and invites them to continue to provide support to United Nations efforts to engage with the private sector and other relevant partners, as appropriate;

7. *Recalls* the recommendation in the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework[1] that Member States apply a smart mix of measures, including national and international incentives and regulations, in order to foster responsible business conduct and ensure the inclusion of all relevant partners;

8. *Recognizes* the vital role that the private sector plays in sustainable development, including by engaging in various partnership models, by generating decent employment and investment, by giving access to and developing new technologies, by offering technical vocational training activities and by stimulating sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth;

9. *Welcomes* the intention of the Secretary-General to steer the United Nations system towards giving greater attention to longer-term, strategic and innovation-based multi-stakeholder partnerships in order to leverage private sector competencies and technologies with a view to generating greater potential for innovation and increased impact on sustainable development, which is needed for the timely achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

10. *Stresses* that greater effort is required to unlock new financial flows, including from mainstream institutional investors, for the timely implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in this regard recognizes the need for the United Nations system to increase its efforts to facilitate financial innovations that leverage public and private investment towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals;

11. *Welcomes* the growing number of businesses that embrace a core business model that takes account of the environmental, social and governance impacts of their activities, including, but not limited to, giving due consideration to non-discrimination, gender equality and the empowerment of women, and encourages and urges all businesses to adopt principles for responsible business and investing, in particular the principles of the United Nations Global Compact;

12. *Also welcomes* the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General to further improve the collaboration of the United Nations with all relevant partners, including the private sector, to strengthen the capacities of the United Nations system, including by mainstreaming understanding of the role of partnerships throughout the system, and to discuss the further strengthening of cooperation and coordination across the United Nations system with regard to partnerships with a view to enhancing the results achieved through them, while acknowledging the importance of continued consultations with Member States;

13. *Further welcomes* the commitment of the Secretary-General to continuing to retain the integrity and unique role of the United Nations Global Compact, and underlines the importance of integrity measures consistent with international law and in accordance with the 10 principles of the United Nations Global Compact;

14. *Invites* the United Nations system, when considering partnerships, to seek to engage in a more coherent manner with private sector entities, including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, that support the core values of the United Nations, as reflected in the Charter of the United Nations and other relevant conventions and treaties, and that commit to the principles of the United Nations Global Compact by translating them into operational corporate policies, codes of conduct, and management, monitoring and reporting systems;

15. *Stresses* the need for the United Nations system to continue its efforts to develop, for those partnerships in which it participates, a common and coherent approach across the United Nations system that places greater emphasis on transparency, impact, accountability, human rights, due diligence and risk management, while taking into account the specific mandates of United Nations agencies, programmes and other entities and without imposing undue rigidity in partnership agreements;

16. *Acknowledges* the importance of corporate sustainability reporting, encourages companies, especially publicly listed and large companies, to integrate sustainability and human rights due diligence information into their reporting cycles, encourages industry, interested Governments and relevant stakeholders, with the support of the United Nations system, as appropriate, to enhance existing models and develop new models for best practice and to facilitate action for the integration of sustainability reporting, taking into account experiences from already existing frameworks and paying particular attention to the needs of developing countries, including for capacity-building, and welcomes in this context the collaboration of the United Nations Global Compact with the Global Reporting Initiative and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development;

17. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to promote effective implementation of the Guidelines on a Principle-based Approach to the Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector;

18. *Encourages* the international community to strengthen global partnerships for the integration and implementation of partnerships underpinned by normative frameworks, including the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization and the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth, in accordance with national plans and priorities;

19. *Invites* the academic, research and scientific communities to contribute to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to support and participate in multi-stakeholder partnerships to this end;

20. *Stresses* the importance of developing national strategies for the promotion of sustainable and productive entrepreneurial activities through partnerships, and encourages Governments to create a climate that is conducive to increasing the number of women entrepreneurs and the size of their businesses;

21. *Recognizes* the work and the important role of the Global Compact Local Networks in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the importance of cooperation between the United Nations system at the local level, including the reinvigorated resident coordinator system, and the Global Compact Local Networks, to support, as appropriate and in a manner complementary to existing networks, the coordination and application of global partnerships locally;

22. *Also recognizes* that the Global Compact Local Networks provide an avenue for diffusing United Nations values and principles and facilitating partnerships with business on a broad scale, and in this regard encourages the Networks to also create awareness of the many ways in which business can contribute to advancing gender equality;

23. *Welcomes* the work of the United Nations private sector focal points network, promoting greater coherence and capacity-building within the Organization on activities involving business and disseminating innovations in engagement across the system, as well as the holding of annual meetings of United Nations system private sector focal points, which remain important forums for the exchange of best practices, lessons learned and innovations in partnerships with the private sector;

24. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, and decides to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-fifth session the item entitled "Towards global partnerships".